



# THE STEPS TO WAR

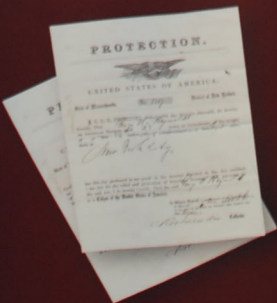
*War of 1812: A Nation Forged by War*

The War of 1812 arose from disputes — over the rights of neutrals at sea rights, American ideas of citizenship, and westward expansion in North America — set against the background of constant war between France and Great Britain.



(Above) After Congress declared war on Great Britain in June 1812, "broadsides," or posters, went up across the U.S. dramatizing American grievances and calling citizens to avenge the country's honor.

(Below) Seamen's Protection Certificates: to prevent Royal Navy captains from pressing American seamen, the United States government issued protections to prove American citizenship.



Britain ruled the sea and France dominated Europe; each took aim at neutral U.S. merchant ships to hurt the other. The British also outraged U.S. citizens by pressing American sailors into its navy, claiming them as subjects. Even frontier Americans resented Britain for her Indian alliances, which create a barrier to expansion.

In response to these affronts, real and imagined, and the increasing pressure of a sizable pro-war party, President James Madison asked Congress for a declaration of war on Great Britain on 18 June 1812.

*"The final step ought to be taken; and that step is WAR."*

Henry Clay, "War Should be Declared,"  
Washington National Intelligencer, 1812



America's Navy: Keeping the Sea Free for More Than 200 Years  
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